

Paper Moon

by musouka

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Summary: A rather unusual type of fic, told from Jyou's point of view. Unabashedly sarcastic, yet bizzarely mushy. This is the complete story, with all chapters available. Shounen-ai.

## 1. Paper Moon -- Part One

> <meta name="ProgId"> Ahem

Ahem.This is my first-ever digimon fanfic. Standard disclaimers apply. I have nothing to my name except my deranged thought process, love of Jyou, and my oversized manga collection. Any attempt by Toei lawyers wielding big sticks to take the aforementioned property will result in a stupid-looking temper tantrum and being kicked in the shins by my adopted "niichan", Hanji-kun. Either that, or he'll just stand there laughing at meâ€|

This is told from Jyou's point of view, except for the very beginning segment, natch.I suppose you could call this an AU, 'cause Digimon02 is non-existent in thisâ€|Couplings are as followsâ€|read and learn ^\_^;;

Paper Moon

By: Musouka

# Say it's only a paper moon

\_Sailing over a cardboard sea \_

—

\_But it wouldn't be make believe \_

—

\_If you believed in me \_

—

\_"You like him, don't you?"\_

\_"Who told you that?!"\_

\_"I have eyes, don't I?"\_

— —

\_"Well, your eyes are wrong! I don't like him! I don't know where you would get an idea like that!"\_

— —

\_"I don't understand; why are you getting so upset? Is there something wrong with liking someone like him?"\_

\_"There is if you're another boyâ€|but I don't have that problem because I'm not like \*that\*!"\_

\_"Like 'what'? All I asked was if you liked him, just like you like Sora."\_

\_"I don't 'like' Sora, and I don't 'like' him, okay?! Just leave me alone."\_

\_"Humans are confusingâ€|"\_

\_"And digimon are obnoxiousâ€|"\_

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"Please, Jyou. You're the only one I can trust with this."

Trust.

I always had a feeling, from the very beginning when I first found my crest, that something like this would come back to haunt me. Not like the Bakemon, I had learned how to deal with those quite a while ago; who would have thought that a few chants would have such a detrimental affect on flesh-eating monstersâ€|but I'm digressing.

Finding my crest wasn't even such a big deal, overshadowed as it was by the sudden appearance of Skullgreymon. It seemed almost like an anti-climax. I can just see it: "Giant Pile of Bones With Attitude Problem Shows Up to Wreak Havoc! And hypochondriac with glasses finds crest. See page twenty-seven for details." It even took long enough for Ikkakumon to evolve into Zudomonâ€|but "better late than never" I suppose. The story of my life, which of course is regulated to page thirty-two in the great newspaper of life. Let's just say I've never been the type to make headlines.

It's easier to think in cliches and recall the past of almost three years ago than to face the earnest look on Yamato-kun's face; to consider what he's asking of me, but it's too easy to run when I'm the only one in danger, it's another thing when a close friend needs your help.

"But why me?" I find myself asking; my rebellious mouth suddenly taking control of my body in a coup that leaves my brain stunned. My heart seems to be going at two thousand kilometers per minute, dimly I find myself expecting to have a heart attack at any moment. I'd almost welcome it; at least it'd get me out of this situation. Not to mention maybe the people at the hospital could amputate that frantically flopping fish that seems to be lodged underneath my diaphragm whenever I open my mouth to talk to him.

"I have to know if he feels the same way." Yamato-kun replies, looking very embarrassed. Yamato-kun embarrassedâ€¦ I'd have been less surprised to see Koishirou-kun give up his laptop and join the basketball team.

"Why don't you just ASK him?"

"I don't want toâ€¦ I \*\*can't\*\* wreck our friendship!"

\_But you're perfectly willing to strain ours to the breaking point.\_ The thought wafts though my head on a breeze of bitterness and then leaves as quickly as it shows up. What friendship?! It's not as if we were ever that close! The only thing I've ever been to him was a perpetually whining nuisance.

"Okay, so let me see if I've got this straight; you want ME to pretend to go out with YOU so that you can gauge TAICHI-KUN'S reaction and see if he's interested in you?"

"When you put it like thatâ€¦" Yamato-kun mummurs, find something fascinating to study on the ground.

"Don't you think you could find someone, well, a bit more believable? Do you really think Taichi-kun's going to get jealous of ME?! The only thing that'll probably run through his head at the thought of you and me as an item is 'Gee, I wonder if Yamato has been doing mind-altering drugs, or maybe he's just been hitting his head against brick walls again?'" I'm breathing so quickly that I'm almost hyperventilating, trying to get air to my lungs after that mini-tirade.

"Jyou." The word is so quietly spoken it's almost whispered. When I turn to look at him, his face is unreadable, but I think I can see something akin to pity in his eyes, it's enough to make me want to turn away again. The only thing that stops me is something vague even deeper in his eyes, something almost likeâ€¦ recognition? And then that "I'm-so-cool" mask slides over his features again.

"Okay. Fine. I'm sorry I asked." He turns to go, his last gesture something similar to a parting wave that one uses to dismiss someone.

"Yamato-kun!" I call, hating myself for what I'm about to do. "I didn't say I wouldn't do it!"

He stops in his tracks, and now it's his turn to turn and inspect me. But when he sees that I'm serious, the corners of his mouth raise in a parody of a smile. At first I think he's mocking me, but then I realize that this is just the way he smiles, like he had to study it out of a textbook or something.

"Thank you, Jyou."

I suppose you could say that's how I became Yamato-kun's "boyfriend".

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Juku is particularly hard that day, with all the strange thoughts crowding in my head, vying for my attention. I'm studying to become a doctor, so doing well at school is extremely important. Some might think I'm strange, but I actually enjoy school. Well, most of the time at any rate.

If you asked me, I'm not entirely sure if I really want to become a doctor. Rather than the human body entrancing me, I'm more on the other side of the spectrum. It scares me! Time and time again, I've heard our bodies likened to "perfect machines", but when you really think about it, what's so "perfect" about them?! Any number of things could go wrong at any time, from invading diseases constantly mounting attacks from the very air we breath, to internal problems that leave most medical practitioners stumped. I don't care what my dad and my brother say, the more I learn the less I wish I knew about the inner workings of humans. Ignorance is bliss!

Try telling that to my dad, though. He's so proud of my brother following in his footsteps, the only thing that could make him any happier is to have TWO sons taking after him." Why can't you be more like your brother?" It seems like I must have came out of the womb hearing that phraseâ€|

And if he knew I was gayâ€|I can't help but cringe. I'd NEVER live up to his expectations then!

Sora-kun and Mimi-kun were the first two to figure it out. Heck, they probably knew before I did! Call it "feminine intuition" if you want, but those two were always teasing me and were completely comfortable with me. When Mimi-kun asked me, in that kind of dippy, but kind of sweet way of hers, if anyone else was aware of my "proclivity towards the same sex" (Those are my words, not hers. Her question was more like "Gee, Jyou, do the others know you like boys?") it made me think about myself for a long time. I didn't want to admit it at first, finding out something of this magnitude about myself was scary, to say the least. I kept it between the three of us for the longest time, until Mimi-kun, again, let it slip to the others.

I was a bit disconcerted by their non-reaction, mistaking it for rejection. It made me retreat into myself again, as usual. I had nowhere else to go. Strangely enough, it was Takeru-kun who first approached me after that big announcement. Maybe it was because he was younger and therefore more flexible in his thought process, but his reassurances really helped me .I don't know why, but I've always felt rather protective of Takeru-kun, almost as if he was the little brother I had always wanted.

The sound of the rest of the class bidding our teacher goodbye snaps me out of my reverie. I hurriedly gather up my books and shove them into my backpack, brushing my long hair from my eyes as I quickly exit the classroom. Yeah, I have long hair. On most kids it'd look rebellious, daring. On me, it just makes me look like a miniature

salary-man. Chibi-Salary-man! Fighting evil with his Briefcase 'O Doom. And his secret identity is "just your average Jyou".

I must be more tired than I thought.

A quick glance at my watch tells me that, in fact, class had run a bit late .Just great. Now I'm going to have to beg notes off of someone, just one more unneeded hassle. Of course, if my head had been anywhere NEAR the same vicinity as my desk, I wouldn't have the problem to begin with. Still, I don't know anyone in the class very well, and it will be rather embarrassing to go up to a stranger and ask them to lend me their notes.

Not, however, half as embarrassing as planting my face squarely in the sidewalk, I think dimly as a spiteful bit of sidewalk decides to trip my feet up while I'm making my way towards the ferry dock. Before I can humiliate myself, however, I feel strong hands reach and heave me not-so-gently to my feet .Icy blue eyes meet mine.

Yamato-kun.

"W-what are you doing here?" I stutter, a bit off balance to see one of my friends intrude in to my "other life". His response is a slight shrug.

"I haven't seen much of Takeru lately, so I decided to visit him. Then I remembered your juku was across the bay in the same area .I decided to wait for you. I thought we could take the ferry home togetherâ€|andâ€|talk."

Yamato-kun has never been one to waste words. The only time he ever really speaks, it seems, is when he's angry or annoyed. I wonder what he considers "having a conversation" amounts to. Maybe he expects me to do something irritating, that way he can yell at me. Just like he does to Taichi-kun.

I'm beginning to regret my decision more and more.

End of Part One

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## 2. Paper Moon -- Part Two

> <meta name="ProgId"> Konnichiwa minna-san

Konnichiwa minna-san! Thank you so much for the feedback! Anyway, just insert your standard disclaimer right here. I borrowed all these characters from Toei, blah blah blah. They have a lot of lawyers and I don't, blah blah blah. Please don't kill me, or worse, take away my Yamaguchi Kappei CDs! I'll be good, I swear!

And just to make sure I don't get picked at, I KNOW Jyou is on a first name basis with all the guys in the series. The "kun" suffixes

are there for a REASON. You'll find out why later. Oh! And uh, time frame! About three to four years after the end of Digimon 01. It's AU, 'cause Digimon 02 doesn't exist in this fic.

## Paper Moon, Part Two

By: Musouka

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# Say it's only a paper moon
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## \_Sailing over a cardboard sea\_

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\_But it wouldn't be make believe\_

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\_If you believed in me\_

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Well, this is terrific! And yes, I AM being sarcastic! I can't seem to stop staring at Yamato-kun as if another head is going to sprout between his shoulder blades. Although, on second thought, perhaps if he did grow another one we'd actually have something to talk about! Or, if worse came to worse, perhaps OTHER head wouldn't be so conversationally challenged. I know I'm not my best on ships, paddle boats shaped like swans excluded; usually I prefer to take the subway back home, but since juku ran so late I thought I should probably get home as soon as possible.

So here I am, my stomach doing its best impression of the "Amazing Mexican Jumping Bean Dance" (TM) as the ship valiantly rides the waves up and down, up and down, up and down... urgh... Why is the harbor so choppy in the first place?! You'd think we were in the middle of a hurricane.

"Hey."

I'm unsure as to whether that was a greeting or a way of getting my attention, but Yamato-kun has apparently left his meditative state and has decided to join the world yet again. It's a good thing too, I was about to tell the captain that we had a corpse onboard.

"I was thinking," Yamato-kun finally continues.

I can't help myself. "Has anyone ever told you that you have an

excellent grasp of the obvious?" I'm fully expecting Yamato-kun to do what he usually does when I make a wisecrack, which is roll his eyes and sigh in exasperation. Instead, I'm pleasantly surprised to see a ghost of a grin quickly flit across his face before he swats it down like an irritating fly. Maybe he's just humoring me.

"Anyway," Yamato-kun continues, "I was wondering if the two of us should go to a movie or something...If we're going to do this convincingly we should probably figure out how to act in public..."

Is he asking me out?

The only other time I've ever been on something slightly like a date was a year ago. It was the most uncomfortable experience of my life. The guy, who for some bizarre reason had been able to tell I was gay (and, I suppose, simultaneously proved the existence of "gay-dar" do meâ€¦), was almost as shy as I was. We had spent most of the time staring at a fascinating little space located right past the left side of our respective heads and making odd joinings of words that were, in retrospect, supposed to be sentences. At the very end of the date, he finally dredged up enough courage to try to go for a kiss, only to miss me entirely as I turned around to unlock the front door, my mind too busy praying that my father was working late again to pay attention to his body language. For some odd reason he never called again.

My brain saves me from an overheating blush by careful recalling the last part of his sentence...yeah, sure he's asking me out â€" for acting lessons! I will my voice not to crack as I open my mouth to answer him.

"Yeah, sure. What did you have in mind?" There is a God; for once the most embarrassing thing possible in a situation didn't happen to me! "Well, let's see. I have juku all week after school...the only day I'm free is Sunday. Of course, that's the only day I EVER have free..."

"Sunday... Isn't that the day we're supposed to meet the others?" Yamato-kun muses, before shooting me a devilish grin. "Well, it won't hurt us to play hooky from a meeting just this once."

I'm a little surprised. Actually, that's an understatement. I would have been less shocked to see Yamato-kun pull down his pants and moon the sour-faced little old lady sitting across from us. Yamato-kun is probably the most responsible of us all when it comes to group activities. When we were in the digiworld, he NEVER wanted us to split up. Taichi-kun usually had to bully him into agreeing to it. And now he wants to blow off a meeting just to go to a movie.

I open my mouth to remind him of our obligations, but snap it shut so quickly my teeth rattle as a thought worms its way into my consciousness. \_Maybe Yamato-kun is sick of it all. \_ Maybe he wants to just be free from everything for a day. Maybe he needs a break from sitting through meetings that just relive the past over and over again.

Just like sometimes I want to scream when my parents start comparing me to Shin-niichan again. I want to say "forget med school, I want to do what I want to do!". The difference between us is that Yamato-kun

can say it, and I just bury it down deep within myself. That subtle, slight difference. Courage.

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"Moshi-moshi! Kamiya residence!" Taichi-kun answers, in that ever-cheerful energetic way of his. I feel tired just listening to it.

"Taichi-kun? It's me, Jyou."

"Hey Jyou. Kinda late to be callingâ€¦is something wrong?"

"No.." \_Oh, \*\*nothing\*\* at all. Just that I'm tired, crabby, and the last thing I want to be doing at one o'clock in the morning is calling you to make lame excuses about why I can't be at the meeting tomorrow.\_ "I just wanted to tell you that I can't come to the meeting on Sunday."

Wait for it, wait for itâ€¦

"Why?"

Boom. What a surprise. Maybe I should have called Sora-kunâ€¦she's probably the least prying of the others.

There are many ways I could answer. I could tell him I'm planning on getting abducted by space aliens; I'm getting a lobotomy; or the truth. Now all I need is to figure out which one is the most believable.

"I'm getting a lobotomy."

"Wha-What did you just say?!?!"

"Nothing. I've got a date."

"Ohhh." A quiet pause as that sinks in before the next question. "So who's the luckyâ€¦uhâ€¦guy?"

"No-one you knowâ€¦" \_â€¦very well. Otherwise \*\*you'd\*\* be the one blowing off plans to go out with himâ€¦\_

--

"Well, okay then. I'll tell the others. It's strange though, Yamato called up earlier to tell me the same thingâ€¦heheheâ€¦YOU two aren't ditching us to go to some cool place together, are you?" The tone is teasing, leaving no space for thought to its perhaps truthfulness. Jyou and Yamato. Ridiculous. Impossible.

"No. We'd at least take you with us." The lie slips out of my mouth surprisingly easily.

"Okay then." I can almost hear the smile in his voice. And something else. Relief? "See ya next time."

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"C'mon! Jyou, that's not fair!" Yamato-kun's voice has a lightness to

it I've never heard before as he grabs my arm in an attempt to pull me back and make me adjust my walking pace to his. As I fall in step he lets go to shield his eyes from his hair as the wind assaults us as we step out the doors of the theater. "You have to tell me! How'd you figure it out before he did?!"

I laugh with a freeness that surprises me even as the melodious sound bubbles past my lips. It shocks Yamato-kun too I can tell, because he pauses ever-so-briefly and glances at me curiously before mirroring the smile on my face. "Well, I'll tell you!" I lean down to impart the secret of my knowledge. "Shinjitsu wa itsu mo hitotsu!" [1]

He shoves me back playfully. "What are you trying to tell me? That you're related to Conan? Actually" now that you mention it I think I can see a resemblance, right HERE!" With that he snatches off my glasses triumphantly, briefly inspecting them before plopping them on his own face. "Uuugh." He looks like he's about to stumble backwards into the street so I quickly grab him and yank him to safety. "How can you see with those things?!" He asks, chagrined, as he hands them back. Meanwhile I'm wondering what exactly they put in the popcorn to make Yamato-kun act like this

Actually, forget Yamato-kun, I want to know like **\*\*I'm\*\*** acting the way I am. I don't think I've ever had so much fun going to a movie before. Sure we've done things like this in the group before, but by the time all eight of us have sat down Mimi-kun is complaining she has to use the restroom; (and of COURSE she has to sit the farthest in) Koushirou-kun turns on the laptop with terse warnings to everyone that if anyone spills anything on it, well, by the time he's done with them they'll wish they were dead. (is that deep of an attachment to a computer natural? And what about bringing it to the theater in the first place?) About that time Takeru-kun is back from the refreshment stand and manages to trip over my feet (are my feet really THAT bi? What a scary thought), while his drink barely manages to miss Koushirou-kun's laptop and deposits itself on Sora-kun's lap. Then while I'm trying to help him up and Hikari-chan is helping Sora-kun, **\*\*I\*\*** usually go down for the count in a tangle of limbs, nearly suffocating poor Takeru-kun. I'm sure Yamato-kun would be insanely worried about the near death of his little brother, except for the fact that he's arguing with Taichi-kun, (oh no. No repressed feelings there) who's managed to eat two buckets of popcorn by the time the trailers start.

Ahh, memories. Privately, I think memories like these are the leading cause in stomach ulcers, well, at least where I'm concerned

"Actually, if you want to know the truth" I reply as we scout the area for somewhere to eat. "I guessed."

Yamato-kun groans. "Remind me not to take you to another murder mystery"

"So where do you want to eat?" I ask, all out of ideas as each place in the area looks a bit tight on the pocketbooks.

"Some place cheap. Unless you're paying"

"Yeah right. I'm a bit old for pocket money, and all my studying doesn't exactly leave me a lot of part-time job opportunities. Unless

you have a place where we can get a high-class meal for about," I quickly check my pockets, "750 en apiece."

"Okay, then! Beef Bowl it is! I think I know where there's one a couple of blocks from here."

We cut through a nice park on the way, the darkness making our surroundings look strangely surreal and amazing. The moon is up and for once you can see the stars; they're so clear that they're almost painful to gaze at. Avoiding amorous couples around us, sometimes awkwardly, we finally make it to the park's entrance.

Unconsciously his hand enfolds mine in a gentle grip as we jog across an intersection. I stiffen and quash the irrational urge to yank it away. My family isn't really the touchy-feely type; any physical contact tends to put me on edge and make me extremely uncomfortable. Yamato-kun doesn't seem to notice however, because even when we're on the on the other side, he makes no move to let go.

A quick, strangely familiar inhalation of air from behind us draws our attention. Taichi-kun and the rest are in a group, staring at us with their mouths open wide enough to drive a large vehicle through them. A quick inspection of the ice-cream cones in their hands answers any questions I had about what they were doing here. Not to mention, this section of town is near where Sora-kun lives. And they were holding the meeting at her house tonight.

I panic. My heart tries to make a break for it by ramming through my chest. \_Sorry\_. I think dimly. \_But we're all in this together.\_

Taichi-kun looks like he's about to say something, but chokes it back in a strangled gasp. I'm only vaguely aware of a slight touch on my cheek as Yamato-kun gently turns my head to face his. His face is getting closer, I note distantly, feeling like my mind has been disconnected from my body. Until suddenly I'm jerked painfully back to the realm of the living as Yamato-kun's lips lightly meet mine.

"Soâ€|did you two enjoy the movie?" Takeru finally asks, shattering the deafening silence.

tsuzuku (to be continued)

Part Two Notes:

[1] Sorry ^\_^;; I just had to make a mention of Meitantei Conan, esp. since the fourth movie is coming out soon! "Shinjitsu wa itsu mo hitotsu!" is, I suppose, the closest thing "Conan" has to a catchphrase. It loosely translates out to "There is always just one truth!"

And for those of you who now are absolutely sure that this is a Jyou/Yamato ficâ€|well, all I can say is that it's not that simple. After all, I do have at least four more parts comingâ€|if there's any interest, that isâ€|(yes, that **\*\*is\*\*** a not-so-subtle hint! ^\_^ C&C is GREATLY appreciated!!) And one kiss doesn't necessarily equal loveâ€|especially when the motives are a bitâ€|wellâ€|how should I put it? Clouded?

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### 3. Paper Moon -- Part Three

> <meta name="ProgId"> Whee

Whee! For once I get half-way through a fic before I get flamed! I feel so loved! Oh, yeah. Jyou-tachi are owned by Bandai. Only my thought process is my own. Hopefully everyone is SOMEWHAT in character! Don't sue me. I like cheese. Are you still reading this?! And that about wraps it up.

Again, this part is told by Jyou. No icky stuff (well, actually that kinda depends on your taste in fics!^\_^;;) so that means it's shounen-ai. I don't think I'd write a yaoi (explicit) digimon fic! A little bit angst-y (more so than the other parts, I apologize), a lot of Jyou-type sarcasm, and a turning point!kind of.

Paper Moon, Part Three

# Say it's only a paper moon

\_Sailing over a cardboard sea\_

\_But it wouldn't be make believe\_

\_If you believed in me\_

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He's warm, so warm. It's amazing how his lips feel against mine. I've never been this close to another person, but I can hear his heartbeat growing to a dull roar in my ears until it's nearly unbearable. Then he finally breaks away to face the others. He's still close to me though, his arm curled around my waist.

Finally our friends explode in a veritable volcanic eruption of questions. The force is almost enough to blow the two of us away. I wait for it to die down. No such luck.

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If this onslaught of questions, accusations, and exclamations keeps on, you can kiss my ears goodbye I'm sure of it. The noise pollution alone is enough to send people to their windows to stare at the commotion in the street below. I have a sudden inane urge to shout "Don't worry! It's just a midnight circus! Come one, come all! Freak show free of charge!"

"Why didn't you just tell us?!" Sora-kun exclaims, grinning from ear to ear. "There was no reason to keep it a secret! Omedetou! Have you set a wedding date yet?" The last part is said with a friendly teasing lilt.

Why do I suddenly feel like crying?

"Just think! Now you two can dress as a pair. That'll be sooo cute! If you need some help picking out clothes you know who to call." Mimi-kun, of course. I know for some couples, wearing matching outfits is par for the course. I personally think it just looks stupid. Not to mention Yamato-kun and I aren't really a couple. We're just a lie.

"It just doesn't make sense. 'Yamato-san and Jyou-san?!' Together?" I'm really worried about Koushirou-kun, I think the illogic of the situation has about fried his neural wiring.

"So you liked the movie, Jyou-san?" That's Takeru-kun, who has managed to make it to his brother's and my side, grinning shyly. "I picked it out myself! Y'see, niichan hasn't gone on many dates, soâ€|"

"Takeru," Yamato-kun interrupts with a mock glare, "Hasn't anyone ever told you not to tell everything you know?"

"I just thought Jyou-san might need some vital informationâ€|" Takeru-kun grins, dancing out of his brother's reach

The only two silent are Taichi-kun and Hikari-chan, Taichi-kun looking for all the world like someone has just stolen his best friend. And I know who did it, too. Me.

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What a night. All I want to do is sleep; I feel like I could sleep for a thousand years. I struggle to fit my key into a suddenly resisting lock, only to have the door open suddenly in my face. Shin-niichan stares down at me. I can tell he's reading my face as any I would read a book. I quickly look down at the floor, knowing my eyes are probably the most expressive part of me.

"You want to tell me what's wrong, or do I have to pry it out of you?" He asks. Oops. I forgot looking away is just as much an admission of guilt as stamping it to my forehead. I can usually hide my feelings from my parents, but from niichan? Never!

I know he won't give me any peace until I tell him. I sigh and lead the way to my room. Glancing around, it's like I'm seeing it for the first time. A small bookcase in the corner, mostly schoolbooks and the odd series by Tanaka Yoshiki, "Arslan Senki" and "Souryuuden" being my two favorites. Of course, I've learned first hand that reading fantasies is more fun than living them. In the very least, books don't give your feet blisters. My bed is on the other side, starkly made with a dark blue comforter. Then, the real center of my room: my desk. Obviously the most lived in part, as can be seen by the neatly stacked piles of paper and the two open textbooks. No movie star posters adorn my walls, no shelf of trophies. In short, "my" room is just "a" room, as devoid of any real personality as most people expect when they first lay eyes on me.

"So I take it the date didn't go too well?" Shin-niichan asks, trying to get me to open up. He sits on the bed and looks at me.

"Yes? No? I don't know!" I have to modulate my voice, just in case my dad walks in. "Listenâ€¦I'm not really going out with Yamato-kun because he **\*\*wants\*\*** me to." Once I begin I can't stop, the whole story cascades past my lips in a confused jumble.

"He just wants to see if Taichi-kun likes himâ€¦" I finally finish. Niichan looks at the ground, his face unreadable.

"Then why?" Now his eyes are burning into mine; I step back from the anger I see in them. "**\*\*Why\*\*** are you DOING this to yourself?! Do you really have such a LOW opinion of yourself that you'd be this desperate for â€" for WHAT?! A date? You don't think someone could love you on your OWN merits?!"

"It's not LIKE that!!" I yell. Shin-niichan looks startled. I'm so angry I can't speak, my whole body is shaking and my fingernails gouge tiny half-crescents into my palms as I clench my fists. Finally manage to get air into my lungs. "You â€" you wouldn't understand! Everything is handed to you! You don't have any REAL problems; hell, you WANT to be a doctor, you HAVE a steady girlfriend who loves you! You're in control of your life! Me, I've never been in control. I've never been able to do what I wanted, had someone who **\*\*wants\*\*** to go out with me! The person **\*\*I\*\*** love has no clue I like them! Is it any wonder that I want to help out Yamato-kun!? That I don't want him to make the same mistake **\*\*I\*\*** did?! He actually has enough courage to go for the guy he likes and if he needs my help, then I'll be DAMNED if I'm not going to do whatever's in my power to help him!"

"Well, if that's the way you feel." His tone cools me off as if a bucket of ice water has been dumped over my head; I've never heard him sound so cold. He brushes off his pants as he gets up to leave. "Maybe **\*\*I\*\*** have problems of **\*\*my\*\*** own too. By the way; just so you know, I proposed to Michiko this afternoon." He pauses, but I'm too stunned to react. Finally he continues. "She said no. Goodnight, ototou."[1]

And then I'm alone; a stranger in a strange room. The memory of Yamato-kun's kiss returns unbidden and unwanted to me as I pull my bed sheets up to my chin; the warmth I felt as his body pressed against mine. And I can't help but wish that it wasâ€¦I'll stop right there. I'm a realist, aren't I?

Sometimes I think a realist is nothing more than someone who dreams, and then tells himself his dream can't come true.

**\*\***

The week passes quickly, as they usually do. I try to throw myself into my work (No, not literally! Knowing my luck, all I'd end up with is a slew of paper cuts and a migraine from all the terms I have to memorize), that way I won't have time for my thoughts to come back to haunt me when I'm alone.

Yamato has been meeting me every day after juku. I expected to feel awkward around him after what had happened, but instead I feel oddly comforted by his presence. It's easy to talk to him. Maybe this experience hasn't been all bad so far; it seems to have brought us two closer at any rate. I think he can tell something's wrong though, because sometimes I catch him staring at me strangely when he thinks I'm not watching. Sora-kun and Mimi-kun have been calling me up

non-stop. I think Mimi-kun has my wardrobe picked out until I turn seventy-five, or I die—whichever comes first. I would have expected a different reaction from those two, considering that Yamato-kun is the resident "ii otoko" [2], but they've been almost unbearably supportive.

I'm on my way to the meeting right now; we've decided to meet in the park this time. The days are getting nicer and the flowers are just starting to bloom, no doubt to end up rolled over by some overly amorous late night couple. I feel bad for the gardeners.

Koushirou-kun is the only one there as I finally make it to the sprawling tree the eight of us usually meet under. I sit down beside him, hoping I won't get grass stains on my butt this time. I do what I can to spare myself lectures at home.

For once, to my surprise, Koushirou-kun doesn't have his trusty laptop; instead he's carrying an almost equally familiar bundle. Well, familiar to me, that is. It's a portable chess set.

My grandfather taught me how to play chess when I was six, right before he passed away. Before I knew how to play, I would make up elaborate stories with the game pieces. He'd always sit and watch me with a smile on his face; I think he just enjoyed spending time with me.

"I thought we could play a game before the others got here." Koushirou-kun says, fishing me out of Memory River. He sets up the board and the pieces on the uneven terrain under the tree, the shadows through the leaves casting a hypnotizing pattern on the black and white board; he's even let me play white this time (our mutual favorite).

"How did you know I would get here first?" I ask, last time I checked, Koushirou-kun's multitude of talents didn't include telepathy.

"It was a simple mathematical probability." He explains as he makes the first move. "Your house is the closest to the park."

Koushirou-kun is a much better player than I am, but out of all the others, I'm the only one he plays with. Maybe it's because, even though I don't usually win, there's enough of a chance I will to make things interesting. I don't know—

"It really shocked me, seeing you two together, I mean." Koushirou-kun exclaims, never taking his eyes off the board. It takes me a moment to understand what he's talking about. For some odd reason I feel strangely insulted.

"Am I that repulsive? My face hasn't scared any small children or animals lately." I sarcastically mumble. Koushirou-kun seems genuinely surprised at my remark.

"No, it's not that. It's just—" I realize that I can nearly see the top of his head; he's looking almost straight down. His hands are clenching clumps of sod, I realize in a bizarre moment of clarity. Too bad I can't understand what he's getting at. What he

says next comes out in a rush. "I-it just seems to me that you two have absolutely nothing in common. Nothing at all."

Would it really hurt to tell him the truth? I feel that if I could trust anyone, it would be Koushirou-kun. I'm not the type of person that tells other people's secrets; I like to think I'm trustworthy in that way, but seeing Koushirou-kun so upset over something soâ€¦so...trivialâ€¦well, I know he can keep a secret just as well as I can.

"Koushirou-kun. I'm only doing this to help Yamato-kun out." I half-whisper. "He likesâ€¦someoneâ€¦and I'm just seeing if that someone has feelings for him too."

Koushirou-kun's eyes widen. "It's Taichi-san, isn't it?" His voice is low. "How can you just sit there and TELL me that?! How can you manipulate someone, toy with their feelings like that?!"

"Hasn't there ever been someone you like, but you've been afraid of their rejection? So much that it paralyzes you, and you can't even TALK to them? You just watch them out of the corner of your eye, silently begging them to look at youâ€¦" I trail off as I notice two twin trails of tears flowing down Koushirou-kun's face.

"Yesâ€¦dammitâ€¦yes, I do!" He chokes.

tsuzuku (to be continued)

Ending notes:

[1] Shin's girlfriend is a figment of my imagination. Don't mistake her for anything else. ::grin::

[2] "ii otoko" loosely translates as "good-looking guy".

\*\*\*\*

#### 4. Paper Moon -- Part Four

> <meta name="ProgId"> Whee

Wow! I've FINALLY managed to get over my block on Part Four! Anyway, this contains shounen-ai. Don't like it? Then utilize that wonderful, wonderful little button with the word 'back' on it at the top of your browserâ€¦otherwise, please enjoy. This is told from Jyou's POV. It's AU, so there are no Digimon 02 characters and references. All Digimon characters are owned by Toei (I thinkâ€¦), I'm only borrowing them and putting them in situations that will require extreme counseling in a few years. No biggie.

Paper Moon, Part Four

# Say it's only a paper moon

\_Sailing over a cardboard sea\_

\_But it wouldn't be make believe\_

\_If you believed in me\_

Koushirou-kun's crying. My mind clumsily stutters through possible courses of action like that American cartoon, Porky Pig, reading Shakespeare. I never know what to do in situations like this; if there was an action figure of me, the instructions would most likely read 'open mouth, insert foot'. Finally, I do the only thing I can think of and hold him close, allowing him to sob inconsolably into my shoulder.

\_When's it my turn to get a shoulder to cry on?\_ I dismiss the thought hurriedly back to the bitterness it spawned from, concentrating on rubbing Koushirou-kun's back consolingly.

Soon he pulls away, wiping his tears and looking stricken at his emotional collapse. I don't ask him who he loves so much that it would drive him to tears. It's none of my business; I'm sure if Koushirou-kun wanted to tell me, he would. Even though I already have a pretty good idea who it is.

\_What is it about Taichi-kun that makes everybody love him so much?\_ But I already know the answer to that question too. Taichi-kun has a certain spark to him; he's so filled with life that people can't help but be drawn to it, can't help wanting to possess it. \_And what about you?\_ I needle myself as Koushirou-kun sets up the chessboard again, desperate to pretend that nothing has happened. \_Is it any wonder that no-one notices you?\_ If Taichi-kun is a firework display, then I'm one of the people watching it on the ground.

Love is for the beautiful, like Yamato-kun and Taichi-kun. All we normal people, Koushirou and I, can do is stand on the sidelines and hope for a ray of that beauty to touch us in some way. It's why I'm doing what I'm doing. Taichi-kun and Yamato-kun \_belong\_ together.

"What are you two doing?" The voice cleaves through my thoughts like a knife through cold tofu. Yamato-kun leans over our game, the sunlight catching his blonde hair and turning it into a shining angelic halo. I look past him to see Sora-kun waving from a nearby bench cheerfully. Koushirou-kun glances at me with an unreadable look before getting up and offering Yamato-kun his spot. I want to protest somehow, but the words won't make it past the traffic jam in my throat.

"Chess, ne?" Yamato-kun's grin is friendly as he lowers himself gracefully onto the spot recently vacated by Koushirou-kun. "I've always wanted to learn, but I've never had the chanceâ€¦" He explains, picking up one of the pieces to examine it closely.

My mouth, again rebelling against my brain's fervent protests, says, "It's not that hard to learn. Want me to teach you? Of course, you'd probably do much better with Koushirou-kun as a teacher"

He cuts me off, his crystal blue eyes looking serious. "Don't be so quick to dismiss yourself, Jyou. People might have more fun with you than you think! I think you'd teach me just fineâ€¦"

Something inside me warms briefly at his words, at the friendship that's sprung and grown between us over the past few weeks. Something to hold warmly against my heart when I'm feeling cold and bitter.

\_But how long will it last?\_ When he gets Taichi-kun, and I know he will, then how much time will he have to spend with me? \_Not to mention, you\_â€|well, that's old news, isn't it?

Reach out for him while you can, Yamato-kun. Don't let him be blind to your feelings.

"Okay," I smile, feeling happy even as my thoughts are warring inside. "The most basic pieces are pawns, and they usually only can move one space, howeverâ€|" I lose myself in the joy of explaining something to a friend.

\*\*\*

"Hey, Jyou-sempai! Move there!" Sora-kun has come over to watch the game, and provide helpful hints to the losing player, which would be me. Actually I'd appreciate it a lot more under different circumstancesâ€|such as when I'm not \_trying\_ purposely to lose. Yamato-kun gives me a \_look\_ as he checkmates me.

"You did that on purpose, didn't you?" I'm surprised at his tone; it's neither hurt nor angry. Just teasing. "Yooshi!" He pushes back the sleeves of his long-sleeved shirt and sets up the chessboard again. "We'll see who loses \_this\_ time!"

Is that a challenge? "I can lose to you any day of the week!" I say quickly, chuckling as Sora-kun starts to giggle. Even Koushirou-kun and Mimi-kun come to see what all the commotion is about, all three of them gathering around the board like it's a television screen or something similar.

I can't help it; I start to laugh as Yamato-kun makes a completely ridiculous move and smirks at me as if he's winning. Inspired, I then move my queen to a place that would have any professional chess player inwardly screaming over its stupidity. This is more fun than I would have thought possible.

\*\*\*

I manage to lose yet again, which has Yamato-kun pouting at me and Sora-kun slapping me on the back. "Congratulations, Jyou-sempaiâ€|I think!" It's the first time I've ever been congratulated over losing something.

"You cheated." Yamato-kun grins, before unexpectedly reaching over the chessboard and tickling me. I laugh hysterically, even as I'm trying to avoid those rapidly moving fingers. As I've said before, my family has never been one for gestures of affection, and I'm a bit disturbed by them. Someone clears his or her throat, the sound bringing us back to earth. I see Sora-kun looking slightly embarrassed, with a tinge of red to her cheeks. Both Yamato-kun and I realize that our behavior might be uncomfortable to those around us suddenly. To those who see us as a couple.

But it's not that. I realize that Taichi-kun has finally shown up, and he's staring at us with an utterly bewildered expression on his face. Then some other emotion wrests control of his body; he turns red and stalks off.

Anger.

Or maybeâ€¦|jealousy?

Whatever the case, I nudge Yamato-kun quickly, surprised as he turns to me with a questioning gaze. The space underneath the tree is empty now, except for the two of us; in the distance I can hardly make out Koushirou-kun and the four others at a refreshment stand. It's now or never.

"Go on!" I hiss under my breath. "Now's your chance!"

He finally understands what I'm saying, and quickly heads off in the same direction as Taichi-kun. To my infinite surprise, I find myself doing the same. Something perverse inside me, no doubt, wanting to make sure everything goes smoothly for the two.

\*\*\*

"Listen! If you want to go out with Jyou it's none of MY business!" Taichi-kun exclaims angrily. I've never heard him so upset, and I inwardly cringe farther into my hiding place, the branches of the bush branding my arm with two twin scratches. I can tell by Yamato-kun's stanch he's rapidly losing his patience, his sky-blue eyes flashing dangerously.

"Would you just LISTEN to me?!" He retorts, stalking over to face Taichi-kun.

"Oh, so NOW you want to talk!" Taichi-kun sounds hurt. "You sure as hell didn't bother telling me beforehand!"

"And what would your reaction have been?!" Yamato-kun's voice is low; I have to struggle to capture the words. "Why are you acting this way?"

"Becauseâ€¦|" Taichi-kun trails off. Brown captures blue as their gazes meet. And then lips do the same.

Even from here, I can tell the difference between the kiss I shared with Yamato-kun and this kiss. I watch carefully, subconsciously trying to memorize the face of love. Ignoring the knife twisting into my heart all the whileâ€¦|

Fireworks are beautiful, aren't they?

\*\*\*

"Jyou-sempai! Where are you going?"

Sora-kun.

"To jump off of the nearest bridge I can find. Let's see if I can give an angel a chance to get its wings!" I'm only half kidding, the bitterness of my words hitting her like a smack in the face. "Home! Where else?!"

"What happened?" She whispers at my onslaught, causing a twinge of guilt somewhere deep inside. But as much as I want to, I can't tell her.

What happened indeed? The meeting was a waste of time as usual; the eight of us going over the same-old same-old of how we all missed our digimon. Yamato-kun and Taichi-kun could hardly keep their hands off one anotherâ€|

But that's not what hurtâ€|It was what I had expected, and THAT'S the reason I'm hurt. \_You can kiss your friendship with Yamato-kun goodbye! Who needs \*\*you\*\* when they have \*\*him\*\*?! \_

I continue on my way, wishing I had that shoulder right about nowâ€|

To be continuedâ€|

## 5. Paper Moon -- Part Five

> <meta name="ProgId"> Whee

Yes, I am absolutely DETERMINED to finish this fic! After this part, there's only one leftâ€|and then I get to start on 'Canvas Sky'â€|yay. Anyway, since the other four parts have contained shounen-ai, what makes you think that this part won't? Well, this is my absolute favorite chapter so far, I've been looking forward to writing this for a loooong time! Still from Jyou's POV. Still angsty, but not as much as the previous chapter...except at the end. Also, before I post Part Six (yeah, I know, I hate it when authors give ultimatums tooâ€|) I'd like to get 100 hits and/or eleven reviews. ::cowers 'cause she sounds so demanding::

Paper Moon, Part Five

# Say it's only a paper moon

\_Sailing over a cardboard sea\_

\_But it wouldn't be make believe\_

\_If you believed in me\_

"Tough day at juku?" Shin-niichan asks as I stumble through the door. The train had been really packed tonight, and I had found myself wedged between two girls who had smelled as if they had private stock in the Japanese perfume industry. The sickeningly sweet stench still clawed at my throat as I tried to breath past my allergy attack. I'm not allergic to many things, but perfume always makes my throat close up painfully. Apparently Shin-niichan can smell it too, because he takes the time to remark, "Or did you bypass juku today and stop by the red light district?" I stick out my tongue at him in reply.

It's been three weeks since Yamato-kun and Taichi-kun have gotten together.

I can't seem to help reminding myself of that whenever I get the chance. Yamato-kun hasn't stopped and waited for me after juku once since then. Strangely enough, the quick flare of pain I usually feel at that thought has turned into a twingeâ€|like a tiny shard of glass lodged deeply into my heart that only acts up occasionally now and then. I distract myself by grabbing my anatomy book and flipping open to the page the class had left off on. I'm ranked number one in the

class, and I wouldn't mind staying there if I possibly can. This means extra studying on my part, usually until two or three in the morning.

The invasive trill of the phone snaps me from my studying as I grope for the receiver on my desk.

Koushirou-kun's voice crackles across the phoneline, "They're driving me CRAZY!"

"Trouble in Paradise?" I ask, already knowing the answer. What I don't understand is why Koushirou-kun isn't content to just let them work through it themselves; fighting has been a part of Taichi-kun and Yamato-kun's relationship from the very beginning. "We can't be their matchmaker fairies forever, you know!" Correction, poor Koushirou-kun can't be their matchmaking fairy foreverâ€¦I've tried not to get involved in their daily squabbles, they always end up kissing and making up anyway.

BTW, what does a matchmaker fairy wear anyway?

"It's always the same thing! Hot and cold, on and off!" Koushirou-kun is getting dangerously close to ranting. I let him, knowing that he just needs a way to blow off some steam. This goes on for about twenty minutes, with me interjecting an approving comment every-so-often.

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"Jyou! Hey, \_Jyou\_!" The voice sounds hauntingly familiar, and I can't stop myself from whipping my head around at the sound, naturally I pay the price for this by smacking into an inebriated salaryman. My butt ungraciously meets the pavement as I hold my aching nose gingerly.

"Daijoubu ka?" It is him, unless there has been a surprising breakthrough in mirage technology that I'm unaware of. I stumble to my feet and turn to face Yamato-kun.

"What are youâ€¦never mind, visiting Takeru-kun, right?" I say, still stunned. He nods and continues for me.

"And since I know you get out of juku around this timeâ€¦" He trails off, motioning towards the subway.

\*\*\*

"I haven't seen you lately." I exclaim, as we get comfortable in our seats. The subway isn't nearly as packed as it was yesterday, just a few late salarymen on their way home to their families, absorbed in their hentai manga, no doubt. I glance at Yamato-kun's face. Is it just me, or does he look guilty? Yamato-kun rubs the bridge of his nose in a habitual gesture I'm very familiar with. He does feel guilty.

"I'mâ€¦sorry." For some odd reason he has trouble getting the last word past his lips. I sigh; the last thing I wanted to do was make him feel awkward.

"It's alright, I haven't been feeling too left outâ€¦after all,

Koushirou-kun's been calling me after juku."

I'm not sure what reaction I was expecting, perhaps a non-reaction, but I certainly wasn't prepared for the probing stare Yamato-kun gives me. It makes me feel uncomfortable, and I squirm in my seat as if trying to wriggle from a snare.

"Sou?" His voice is light, but there is a hidden meaning behind it that my befuddled mind can't decipher at the moment. "You two would make a cute couple!" There's a strange edge to his voice, I realize, before wrapping my mind fully around his words.

"W-w-w-WHAT?" I splutter, causing one man across from us to look up from his newspaper in alarm. Yamato-kun grins slightly at my consternation, or maybe it was just the bright red traffic light of a blush lighting up my cheeks.

We pass the rest of the trip in an itchy silence, the light that beams every so often from the windows making Yamato-kun look strange, alien; someone I can't begin to understand. It makes me wonder if I ever did in the first place.

\*\*\*

So the week passes as it usually does. Shin-niichan reminds me that we need groceries and then graciously volunteers me to go buy them. It's times like these that REALLY make me reaffirm the love between two brothers. Yeah right.

I enter the grocery store and begin to traverse up and down the aisles, glancing at the rather lengthy list to make sure that I'm not leaving anything out. In exchange for doing the shopping today, Shin-niichan promised to make me my favorite for dinner. Yakitori. I can feel my mouth watering already; Shin-niichan is a REALLY good cook. He says it attracts the girls, not that I would know or care, but personally my culinary expertise is right up there with the IQ of a tree stump. In other words, I think I could burn a pot of water; I can't even make a cup of instant noodles right!

"Ara! Jyou-kun!"

I look up from decoding my brother's handwriting, you can really tell he's a doctor, only to meet familiar aquamarine eyes. It's my brother's ex-girlfriend, Michiko-san.

"Shin maneuvered you into doing the shopping again, Jyou-kun?" She asks conversationally. I've always liked Michiko-san, even when I was younger she always treated me as her equal, never talking down to me as some adults did. Heck, I worshipped her! In my mind, she and my brother were destined to be together. I had always assumed that they would one day get married, have kids, live out the perfect life. When Shin-niichan had broken the news that she had rejected his marriage proposal, I had been stunned to say the least.

"Do you have some time before you have to get home?" She asks politely. If I was faithful to my brother, I wouldn't have anything to do with her—but well, even if she had hurt my brother's feelings, broken his heart even, I couldn't really hate her. It was like choosing between an older brother and an older sister. I knew Michiko-san well enough to know that she must have had SOME reason to

break their relationship off.

It was with those thoughts in mind that I followed Michiko-san to a nearby café. She sat down and motioned for me to do the same.

"So how is Shin doing?" She asks hesitantly, a finger going up to twist in her chestnut hair distractedly.

"He took it really hard." I don't want to be that blunt, but there isn't any other reply I can really think of. Her response is a mournful sigh.

"Listen, Jyou-kun," Her eyes are serious, "I love your brother. I always have and I always will."

I wait, knowing there has to be a 'but' coming.

"But I couldn't tell him that. When he proposed to me, it scared me. Marriage is such a BIG step." She can't meet my eyes, but if she did, she wouldn't find them cold. I know what it feels like to be afraid like that. "Jyou-kun, what do YOU think makes a good relationship?"

The question catches me utterly by surprise. "I don't really know." It's true. Michiko-san and my brother always had a quiet relationship. And I had always looked upon their relationship as what I wanted for myself. It wasn't the passionate, lust filled kind so commonly found soap operas; it was almost a deepening of a friendship.

"We had been fighting a lot. And, well, sometimes things just don't work out. Life's funny that way." Michiko-san gets up suddenly, almost business-like in her manner. "Jyou-kun, I think you'll make someone very happy someday. You're willing to work at something you feel strongly about; don't underestimate yourself; people can be blind in different ways. You \_are\_ loveable."

And then she's gone, melted away into the thickening soup of the crowded streets. Michiko-san always seemed to know me better than I knew myself; one glance of those beautiful eyes could see straight to the core of me.

\*\*\*

Michiko-san's words haunt me as I listen to the rain beat steadily on my window. \_People can be blind in different ways.\_ It nags at me, tickling a tiny corner of my mind. I've been so obsessed with my affection for 'him' that maybe I'm overlooking something else.

## All those glances in your direction; the way he would look at you;

Am I loveable? I'm not dynamic. I'm not a genius. I'm not cute, or sporty, or anything but; well, me. But what's if that was all he was looking for? Maybe he didn't even know it as well; chasing after a moon that was nothing more than a paper cutout.

I'm thinking crazy now. The rational part of my mind is on red alert, telling me not to read too much into things; but for once I don't

tuck the daydreams back into the corner of my mind. I'm playing his words over and over again in my head, like a skipping record player in need of a good kick.

Could it have possibly beenâ€|?

Jealousy?

I grope for my phone; unsteady fingers punching in the familiar number. I can't bear not knowing any more. I'll talk to him and get this whole mess cleared up once and for all.

There is a desperate pounding at the front door. I hurriedly roll off the bed, replacing the phone in its cradle in a clumsy movement, and stumble into the hallway, grabbing at the latch desperately as I make it to the door.

Crystal-blue eyes filled with pain latch on to mine. Yamato-kun's shirt is soaked to the skin, his pants in a close wet embrace to his thighs. And his halo of sunshine is plastered to his head like a helmet. I gasp and drag him inside. He follows me limply like a rag doll, the only thing alive about him is his eyes, a mix of soul-deep anger and pain reflected in their depths.

"Yamato-kunâ€|"

"It's over," He says dully. His tone of voice frightens me, as does the parody of a grin spreading over his features. "It's funny, that I'd end up here, you know. I've been thinkingâ€|but I couldn't believe it. Wouldn't accept it. After all that's happened." His voice breaks, sounding like a child's. "I knowâ€|didn't mean itâ€|butâ€|god. It hurtsâ€|probablyâ€|overreactingâ€|" And then he grabs me in a hug so hard my ribs protest. I don't think he's physically hurt, but obviously something's happened. I don't pry; just make soothing murmuring sounds in the back of my throat.

I've lost track of the number of times I've dreamed of holding Yamato-kun in my arms, but I've never wanted it to be like this.

Never like this.

To be continued.

## 6. Paper Moon -- Part Six

> <meta name="ProgId"> Yes, it's over

Yes, it's over! DONE! Bwahahahahah! Um, anyway, this part contains shounen-ai...blah, blah, blah...disclaimers are boring, blah, blah, blah. Still from Jyou's POV. This part should answer a lot of questions, but not ALL of them...I'll leave that for Canvas Sky. I have a real love/hate thing going on with the ending of this ficâ€|::sigh:: But I'll let you guys find out on your ownâ€|

This part is devoted to shimmercat-san, Rahn-san, and everyone on the ex-Jouri ML (and new Jouriplus ML) and to everyone who's been nice enough to review my work. (please see bottom for details)

Paper Moon, Part Six

\_Say it's only a paper moon\_  
—

\_Sailing over a cardboard sea\_  
—

\_But it wouldn't be make-believe\_  
—

\_If you believed in me\_  
—  
— —  
—

I wake up to warmth, familiar and soothing. I haven't felt so comforted -- \_safe -- since I was little. It's like, well...when I used to have nightmares, I would crawl into my brother's bed after I woke up. Sometimes he wasn't very happy, especially if my feet were cold, but he'd always soothe my fears and comfort me until I fell asleep again. At first I'm vaguely confused; I'm not in my room and the unfamiliar surroundings are a bit disconcerting. I look down and nearly jump out of my skin in surprise.\_  
—

Yamato-kun is curled up next to me on our over-stuffed couch. His hair is sleep-tousled and looks unbearably soft without its daily quotient of gel, his face unworried and without that oh-so-familiar mask while he sleeps.

I want to keep him like that forever; in a place where no pain and sorrow can reach him. But if I did, then I'd never see him laugh or grin again. What is peace without suffering?

Last night is coming back to me, a comforting drip of memories that I allow to ripple over the pool of my mind as I curl up again. Yamato-kun had come to my house in the rain; soaking wet and choking back angry sobs. I had finally managed to comfort him and get him out of his soaking clothes; no easy task considering I didn't even know what had set him off in the first place. He's in a borrowed outfit of mine right now. Last night had been the most difficult night in the world for me, difficult for me not to demand who had hurt him like this, what had been said to put him in such a state.

But I didn't. Obviously it was something extraordinarily personal, and I understand how it is when you don't want to talk about it. When you just want a shoulder to lean on and someone to tell you they care about you.

Finally, we sat on the couch together, trusting the dim glow of late night television to wipe away our mutual troubles. We must have fallen asleep.

There is an odd choking sound behind me, causing me to crane my head back to see my older brother pounding at his chest where he accidentally inhaled his morning cup of coffee.

"Mou!" He manages to splutter in my general direction. "Next time give me a little warning before you and your date have a sleep-over." I'm sure my face now matches the red on his shirt to a tee.

"What are you TALKING about?!" The hysteric sound of my voice obviously wakes Yamato-kun up, because he wipes his eyes before opening them. He also glares at my offending brother with the sleep-slurred irritation of someone who has just been woken up from a pleasant dream. Shin-niichan ignores me to meander on over to where Yamato-kun is curled up at my side, locking gazes with him.

"You two were awfully quiet." He says to Yamato-kun, ignoring me and my frantic attempts in the universal sign language of 'shut up right now before I kill you'!

"Huh?" Is Yamato-kun's intelligent reply.

"Don't pay any attention to him, Yamato-kun..." I mutter, then to Shin-niichan, "Don't you have a hospital to go to?"

"On my way out..." Comes the distant reply as he moves towards the door, adjusting his shirt in an almost businesslike manner. I'm so angry I'm not even going to tell him about the large coffee stain -- from where he had exhaled upon seeing us -- right in the middle of his shirt. No way, nuh-uh.

\*\*\*

I'm staring at Yamato-kun like he's an alien just beamed in from another dimension as he stretches and scratches an itch on his upper thigh easily; I'm trying to memorize each and every facet of his 'morning look'. Heaven only knows when I'll have another chance to see him like this; without that mask firmly cemented in place.

I don't have enough courage to do anything but watch.

I can feel all the resolve I had gathered last night slipping through my fingers. It had been one thing dialing his number with those insane thoughts still on their Gojira-ish (1) rampage through my mind, but it's something else when he's here right now. I know I should be perfectly content to be his shoulder to cry on.

I can love him from afar.

Him \_and Taichi-kun. Strangely, I have to remind myself. \_

\_

The two of them had become so firmly entrenched in my mind as \_what I wanted for myself. Ever since the Digital World, I was never in the spotlight, but I was always perfectly content to support both of them in my own way. For the longest time, choosing between them was an impossibility. I found perverse pleasure in torturing myself over the fact that I'd never have either of them.\_

—

And now it seems I've subconsciously made my choice. When did I make it? It's hard to say...perhaps that one day so long ago when I chose not to follow Taichi-kun and went looking for Yamato-kun. When they split up in the Digital World.

I think that's it. My heart just didn't feel like informing the rest of me, that's all. Stupid heart.

\*\*\*

"Do you need to call your father?" I ask. The silence between us as he follows me around the house, attempting to help me with my early morning chores, is easy; it's not a hungry silence that demands to be filled with so many awkward words.

He shakes his head as he helps dry the remaining dishes; finally I can make us some breakfast. "He's out of town. He doesn't even know I'm gone." The tone is not bitter, but almost playful, as if he's a little kid who's just gotten away with sneaking a sweet before dinner.

Mocking us, the phone rings, interrupting something Yamato-kun was going to say. I pick it up, half expecting to hear Shin-niichan's irate voice berating me for letting him leave the house with his shirt in such a state. Instead, a familiar voice practically oozing with painful guilt answers my greeting.

"Hello, Jyou. It's Taichi. Is Yamato there?"

"Good morning, Taichi-kun." At the name 'Taichi' I can see Yamato-kun's shoulders stiffen. I gesture towards Yamato-kun, indicating that Taichi-kun wants to speak with him, and in response get a violent gesture of 'NO'.

"He's not here right now." He knows I'm lying, but doesn't challenge my words.

"Could you...could you tell him that I'm...I'm sorry? Please?" I feel such a mixture of emotions at that very second it's all I can do to say 'yes' and hang up the phone at the abrupt dial tone assaulting my ears. I'm angry, hurt, upset, bewildered...all rolled up into one confused package. At Taichi-kun...for Taichi-kun...I don't know.

I don't want to think about it, so I keep myself busy by starting to prepare some coffee.

"Jyou." I love it when he says my name. I can't help myself, just hearing it roll off his tongue gives it a new sound of its own. "Thank you. For last night, I mean." He amends hastily.

Now the silence is getting strangely \*uncomfortable\*, descending upon us like a water-laden blanket over a comfortably warm fire. I turn quickly away again; for some odd reason, I always make my coffee with hot water, it's not as if it makes it get done any faster but maybe it's just a mental thing...and I'm babbling incoherently. I didn't know one could make one's thoughts babble. That's me, the overachiever. Yeah right.

"Jyou," Yamato-kun continues after a long pause, "\_O-omae ga s-s...suki da." (2)\_

—

The coffee pot drops into the sink with a sharp glass-on-metal protest. My befuddled mind can only think of one word, echoing down its corridors.

\_Why? Why? WHY?\_

—

"Why?" Yamato-kun looks confused at my question. I don't even give him the chance to open his mouth.

\_Why am I so...so angry? Shouldn't I be happy? This is the moment I've fantasized over a thousand different times; a hundred different ways. What am I supposed to do now, Yamato-kun? Fall into your arms? Let you carry me away, because you've \_finally done what I've been dreaming about for over four years?\_\_

—

When does a dream become a nightmare? When it comes true?

Why do I feel like this?

"Why do you love me? Because I was a warm body to grab on to when you were hurting? Because you want to get back at Taichi-kun and I'm the best way to do it. Maybe you think this is love, but what does love even MEAN to you? I thought you LOVED Taichi-kun, couldn't bear to be without him! That's why you asked for my help, isn't it?!" This can't be my voice\_, this cold parody. \_

—

Oh, it hurts. It hurts worse than when you couldn't tell my feelings; when you asked me to help you get Taichi-kun. When you kissed me and didn't mean it. When you smiled at me and let my heart's wings soar in useless hope. When I searched for you in the Digital World and then, finally, when I found you and looked into your eyes—and discovered that I wasn't the person you wanted.

I don't want to hear these words from you, knowing I'm second choice.

Before, I had always assumed that I would grasp at any love that was offered to me. What's changed?

I know. You've changed me. You gave me your friendship, even if I doubt the motives behind it, I certainly can't deny the actual feelings. You made me feel, for once in my life, that I was a person worth knowing, worth caring about.

And it's bitterly ironic that those feelings you awoke in me are the same ones that won't let me cheapen myself right at this moment, even though I can tell I'm wounding you deeply with every word.

"If you love me -- really love me -- try coming back in a week and

saying the same thing." I turn away from him now, "When you've had some time to kiss and make up with Taichi-kun. I won't hold my breath."

"Fine."

I can hear the barely controlled anger in his whisper, I can hear it in his footsteps as he walks to the door. The creak of its hinges as it opens, and the gentle whump as it shuts. I know him so well.

I won't cry. I won't cry.

"You know what?" It's Shin-niichan, buttoning up a new shirt. I don't know when he came back in, but I wouldn't be surprised if he heard the whole thing. "You're a real bastard."

I whirl to face him, not caring that my face is red from holding back tears. My mouth opens, but I can't find my voice.

"I wouldn't be surprised if he never came back; I know \*I\* wouldn't." His tone is conversational. "But you wouldn't know, would you? How much courage it takes to say those words, and then how it feels as the person you love most rips your heart to shreds before your very eyes."

This isn't really about me, and the fact that he can even say something like that infuriates me beyond words.

"What about you?! How can YOU understand how it feels? How Michiko-san --" I can tell I hit a nerve with that when his eyes widen, "-- and I feel when we wait for so long, whispering soothing things to our aching hearts at night because you won't -- CAN'T say those words until it's too late! You only say them when you hurt, when you're desperately grabbing at anything that would make you feel secure, and we're the nearest ones to you! And then we can't take you at face value, so we stumble and you turn away! You run back home to lick your wounds and your pride is so strong that you can't come back and face us! THAT'S love?! Well, I don't NEED it, then!! And neither does Michiko-san!"

I run to my room before he can say another word.

\*\*\*

It's Sunday again. A week since Yamato-kun stormed out.

Shin-niichan and I have managed to reach a tremulous peace with one another, but I don't think I've exchanged more than a handful of words ever since our fight. It sounds funny, but I miss my big brother. I'm so used to his teasing voice following me around, that my own little world is painfully lonely in its silence.

We're looking at this from completely opposite sides; him of the rejected boyfriend, me of the hurt significant other. Which is even more amusing when you stop to consider the fact that Yamato-kun and my relationship wasn't anything more than a bit of play acting.

I don't expect him to come back; it's too much for anyone to expect, really. Yamato-kun can be an extraordinarily difficult person to get along with.

And yet, why do I feel as if what we had "whatever label one chooses for it" was meaningful in a way. It almost seemed at times that I could understand him better than I could myself as if we just sort of belonged together; the two of us sharing an innate understanding of the other.

A high-pitched giggle jars me out of my thought process; I have to restrain myself from clapping my hands over my ears. That would be Aya-san, our neighbor's daughter she's about my age and has the most grating laugh I've ever heard, it just sort of rises in pitch and intensity until you can't stand it any more. I glance out of the corner of my eye to see her dressed in a light blue yukata "hmm, we must be having a neighborhood festival. Briefly I recall our last one, where Aoyama-san (he lives on the end of the street) had gotten drunk and tried to set off his own personal fireworks display with what looked to be some altered fireworks. Heaven only knows where he got them in the first place. The results had not been pretty.

Maybe going out tonight is just what I need.

\*\*\*

I just change into something comfortable before ducking my head into Shin-niichan's room and explaining where I'm going. He's been working late, and he certainly doesn't look up to going out tonight, so I don't even bother asking and dad's still at the hospital. I can remember, when I was little, I used to get really excited over getting to wear a yukata, but now it's too much of a hassle.

The streets are crowded with throngs of people and various stands; little kids trying to win a goldfish, older ones pestering their parents for candied apples and other snacks. The very air is sodden with laughter; it's almost impossible to be unhappy in such an atmosphere.

I find myself making my way towards the high school; that's where they'll most likely be holding the fireworks display. I've loved fireworks ever since I was little the high-pitched scream as they shoot into the sky and then explode, dazzling my senses as the patterns and shapes seem even brighter because of the night sky.

Hmm, I wonder why I've been feeling so nostalgic lately.

I find the perfect vantage point on a hill that swells up behind the high school. I'm vaguely surprised when I look around and see that I'm the only one around. It's dark and the wind's a little chilly. I wish I had brought a jacket.

Being so high above everything is nice in a way, but at the same time I feel I feel.

Lonely.

If I feel this way, it's my own fault! I remind myself. After all, ever since we got back from the Digital World, I've been distancing myself from them. I don't really know why it could be a lot of things. I didn't want them to reject me, I suppose, is the clearest

way I can explain it. Oh sure, I still go to meetings, and generally hang out with themâ€|but before I knew it, I was adding the suffix 'kun' to all their names, distancing myself verbally; I didn't laugh as much, telling myself I was content just to watch them have fun. I told myself it was a part of getting older.

So I placed myself on a high, lonely hill in my mind; not because I thought I was better than them, but because I felt as if I was gazing at them from a distance.

But it gets cold up here.

"â€|Mind if I sit down?" I'd know that voice anywhere. Yamato. I didn't even hear him come up the hill, but I suppose I wasn't really paying attention.

I nod my agreement silently, half wondering if he can even see it in the darkness. Is he really even here, or have I finally snapped? That's funny, I don't think I'm crazyâ€|but most crazy people don't. I decide that if I AM going insane, at least this seems to be a pleasant way of doing itâ€|

"Your brother told me you'd be here." The softly spoken words meander down the hill into the darkness; I almost fancy I can see them disappear. We're both content to watch the hustle and bustle below, neither one of us meeting the other's eyes. I feel strangely relaxedâ€|and happy. Even if he's come to tell me that he's made up with Taichi-kun â€|which for some odd reason I doubt, don't ask me \_why\_â€|"at least he came back to tell me face-to-face. It at least gives me hope concerning our friendship.

Yamato-kun chuckles before continuing, something in him perhaps recognizing the universal 'big brother-ness' of what he's going to say next. "He also told me that if I was going to hurt your feelings, I might as well turn right around and go back home. \_Before\_ he had to hunt me down and kick my ass."

"Yamato-kun, Iâ€|"

"Stop calling me that!" His protest is violent and sudden, bursting from his lips as if he had been holding it back for a long time. "I hate it when you distance yourself from us! We're all your friends!"

So he had noticed too?

"I'll keep that in mind, Yama-chan." I say the last part in my best impression of Mimi-kun; it's worth it to see Yamato shudder, then chuckle behind his hand.

"Here I am trying to be serious, and you're \_mocking\_ me!" Yamato says, laughter evident in his tone. It's as if nothing had ever happened between us.

"So be serious."

Silence descends upon us for a few moments, as we both pretend to be engaged in watching the team below set up the fireworks for the show. Finally, Yamato begins to speak, his voice low.

"I want to tell you what it was like going out with Taichi." I just nod, content to let him go at his own pace. "Taichi isâ€¦well, he's really just amazing. Whenever you're around him, it'sâ€¦hard to explain. It's as if you're just infused with \_energy\_. You feel as if you could take on the whole world." I can hear the longing in his voice, and I can feel that familiar twinge of pain grip my heartâ€¦but I stay still.

"At least, that's how it started for me. But then, I began to notice little thingsâ€¦he didn't understand when I just wanted some time alone, so we'd quarrel about it. Stupid little things like that, but they seemed like such a big deal that neither of us wanted to be the first to apologize. We never seemed to be able to make our schedules mesh; he'd always seem to have a soccer game on the same day as my band practiceâ€¦and then we'd fight about that.

But even that wouldn't have been too much of a problem, ifâ€¦if I hadn't felt so \_dissatisfied\_ whenever I was with him â€" don't get me wrong, it wasn't \_his\_ fault, or anything he did in particularâ€¦but I'd find myself wondering how \_you\_ were doing at the oddest moments."

I turn to look at his silhouette, searching for any sign, no matter how small, that he's just kidding.

"I missed the way you'd explain the way your day had been while we were both sitting on the train home. The way something or someone would occasionally upset you that day, and you'd get so angry that you'd gesture dramatically as you relived that particular irritation. Then your face would get so red when you realized that everyone was staring at you. I missed the way you would ALWAYS end up falling asleep on the train after a difficult exam, and then I'd practically have shake you to death so you could get off at your station. And even then you'd still be half asleepâ€¦"

His voice is filled with such fondness as he turns though his memories of me that I feel my cheeks warming as he gets lost in his recollections.

"At first I thought I was going insane â€" "

"Oh, \_thanks\_. " I mutter, without any real malice.

"â€"And I tried to tell myself that I wasn't feeling like this; that these emotions were no more than figments of my imaginationâ€¦but then, when I met you again at \_juku\_ that one night after Taichi and I had started going out, and you mentioned that Koushirou had been calling you every nightâ€¦I felt soâ€¦\_jealous\_â€¦"

I had been \_right\_! The thought is rather startling.

"Thenâ€¦that night. I know he didn't \_mean\_ to say itâ€¦but after he did, all I could think was 'He loves me enough to know what hurts me, but not quite enough to refrain from using it against me when he's angry.' I didn't even really have a destination in mind when I ran out of his house, but somehow I ended up at your apartmentâ€¦I think I finally realized something."

"Jyou â€" " The rest of his words are cut off by a high-pitched screech as the first firework of the evening ascends into the night

sky, nearly deafening both of us with its crash as it explodes with a brilliant burst of light against the inky night sky. I laugh at his irritated expression; it's that of a thwarted five year-old.

For once "for one brief moment" everything is right in my life, and it makes me feel drunk on euphoria. I stand, wanting to be closer somehow to that dazzling array of colors in the sky.

"WHAT?!" I call to him, teasing him just a bit. I can't help it.

He stands too, finally facing me and meeting my eyes. "\_OMAE " GA " SU " KI " DA\_!!" He exclaims, trying to raise his voice above the din.

I motion for him to say it again, pretending I hadn't heard him. His only response is an evil grin as he suddenly --without warning " enfolds me into a tight embrace. I tense slightly. I can smell the faint fragrance of his shampoo still clinging to his silky hair; feel the cotton weave of his shirt as I finally relax and rest my head on his shoulder.

\*\*\*

I think we both wanted to kiss right there, with the fireworks exploding around us; just like in the movies. For some strange reason, though, we were both too shy, and by the time our lips finally \_did\_ meet, there was nothing illuminating the sky except for the soft, natural light of the moon.

But that's okay.

I think I'd rather have the moon lighting my way than a thousand fireworks.

~owari~\_

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Special Thanks (in no particular order):

shimmercat-san: For bugging me until I started up again, her wonderful Jyou shrine (which majorly inspired me!) and for listening to the ramblings of a crazy person. You made me feel a bit less nutty for liking Jyouto as much as I do! ^\_^ I probably wouldn't have finished if not for you! (whoa, that rhythms!)

Rahn-san: For emailing me and listening to me ramble on about nothing (aka this fic...) for writing back after it became obvious that I was insane, and for being fun to talk to! I'm so glad you're on the Jouriplus ML now; we're not the most talkative bunch, but we're a lot of fun! And even more fun with you on board now!

Rei-san: For that too too too CYUTE Iori piccie you sent me! Sure, I may be over-reacting, but getting that in my inbox was really a highlight of the holidays! I promise I'll have that Igunisu/Takurou fic done SOMEDAY! Thank you so much for the kind words.

Su-chan: You read this even before you liked Digimon...and you'll never know how much that means to me. To the best pre-reader and most wonderful friend in the whole universe! You keep me human! Daisuki

yo, Su-chan! There's only one of you in the whole world, and I'm glad you're my ichiban no otomodachi!

Hanji-niichan: You already know why, my twin separated at birth. I love you, dork. (and if you make any stupid remarks, I'll kick your ass!) Please write more, I LOVE your stories!! And stop putting yourself down; you're a wonderful writer!

Kenpi-otouto: Because I love you, silly. You're the best little bro in the whole world and I wouldn't trade you for anyone else!! And you're a darn good writer yourself! \_Anta no Zoca-oujisama ga daaaaaaisuki!! \_And Mamoru too! And Shakome! ^\_~

Lastly, to everyone who's ever filled out a review box for my story: Some of you I know better than others (Aardwulf-san, I know you!! ^\_^ You too, Lady Kido-san! And Katt-san! And marian-san, you've reviewed every part! And you've been with me all this time too, cali-san!), but whenever I went to check my profile and saw how you had taken the time to review my worthless fic...well, it's impossible to explain how wonderful you all made me feel. I'm not going to pretend my fic is any sort of masterpiece, but just knowing that people actually cared enough to write those comments to me...for a brief moment it made me feel like I was doing something special. It makes me want to continue writing.

Also, I have to give Kappei-san a bit of credit, here. His singing is one of the reasons for my burst of creativityâ€|I always get that way when I listen to my \_ichiban daisuki na seiyuu-san no koe\_.  
#^\_^#

Ending Notes:

(1) That would be Godzilla hereâ€|

(2) \_'Omae ga suki da.'\_ â€" 'I love you'

As to the ending of the fic itself, I had a real controversy going on inside. The stuff I write does NOT tend to end happily (at least I didn't kill anybody this timeâ€|^\_^;;) and I wasn't planning to have Paper Moon be any different. But as I was writing and planning, I found myself unable to go with the original ending I had decided upon. This is also the reason why the series was lengthened to six parts rather than the original planned three. I just couldn't help but give Yamato and Jyou a happy ending, even though I fretted and worried over the realism of the situation, I'm actually rather pleased with the way it came outâ€|^\_^!!!!!! I apologize for the sap, but I really couldn't help itâ€| Forgive me!

Anywayâ€|

Domo arigatou gozaimashita minna-sama. See you in 'Canvas Sky'!!

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Free Talk

> <meta name="Author"> papermoonfree

Paper Moon " Free Talk

> <p><br>

I don't know about you guys, but I LOVE hearing about what the authors were thinking when they write a fic. I know a vast majority of you just skip over authors notes, sometimes with mixed results ::snickers:: not unlike what happened to one poor girl when she read "Yasashiku Naritai". I'm really not trying to sound egotistical hereâ€|but I thought for those of you who were wondering the why and how of certain things in the fic might be interested. Like "why fireworks" or perhaps you might be interested in a few of the alternate endings I had planned out. In any case, no ones forcing you to sit down and read itâ€|so please, I'm sure there are better fics you could be reading right now! Just check out the ones on my Favorites list! Now there are some authors!!

> <p>

Oh you're still here? Well, I suppose I should get started then.

I chose the song "Paper Moon" for the basis of a fic because it's a paradox. On one hand, the lyrics are mournful when read; someone begging for a make-believe world to be real. Things unreal are real if only they are believed in. Yet for those of you who have heard the song, you know it's cheerful and upbeat. That's what I wanted to convey, a fic with a sort of bitter humor; funny on the outside, angsty on the inside.

A lot of my own views about love can be found within the fic, not just that Yamato and Jyou make a good couple, but that you must be friends with someone before you can truly love them. Infatuation only lasts a few months; afterwards you are left with the person. And if you aren't friends, the romance fades fast. I'm not trying to insinuate that Yamato and Taichi aren't friendsâ€|but I don't know if they could work with one-another to create a balanced relationship. I think they are the types that make better friends, rather than love interests.

Writing as Jyou was fun. I imbued him with a very sarcastic wit, but only on the inside, directed at himself. On the outside I wanted him to be gentle and sweet. It's hard to tell, but you should be seeing more of that side of Jyou in Canvas Sky (more on that later). One of the main points I wanted to convey was Jyou and Yamato's dual understanding of one another. Yamato picks up on how Jyou subtly slams himself and doesn't like it. Likewise, Jyou understands Yamato. He knows when he just doesn't feel like talking and respects that, and can emphasize with being in love with someone and feeling like you can do nothing about it.

The "hints" of Jyoushirou were a red herring. I can tell you as the author that Jyou and Koushirou were never interested in one another (yet another couple I think goes together better as friends). At the time of writing, Jyoushirou was very much the rage, so I had a lot of fun being purposely ambiguous on that front. Who did Jyou really love? Or thought he loved? Well if you read closely, or just read the

last chapter where it's spelled out for you, you'll find hints that Jyou liked Taichi as well as Yamato. Now imagine how that felt? You're helping the guy you love winâ€|the guy you love.

A lot of people have asked me about "Canvas Sky" is. Well, "Canvas Sky" (it's another verse of Paper Moon, natch) is the events of Paper Moon as told by Yamato's perspective. It's not just a recap, because remember that Yamato has more interaction with the group. He gets a firsthand view of how the group reacts to him and Jyou "going out", not to mention, Takeru plays a bigger part. Y'see, Jyou was rather isolated, but Yamato is right in the thick of thingsâ€|

"Paper Moon" is more of an arc of stories, dealing with their relationship. The next part is "Drifting on a Cardboard Sea" which is just a one shot that involves the tremulous relationship between Yamato, Takeru, and Jyou. Basically, Jyou doesn't feel like he can tell his father about his and Yamato's relationship, Yamato gets angry, Takeru defends Jyouâ€|and the shit hits the fan.

I also have "Love Letters", which is a MAJOR joy to writeâ€|it involves an email mistake of a majorly embarrassing kind. And that's all I'm going to say right now.

But back to Paper Moon. I was kinda worried that it would seem like I was making Taichi into the villain, and it becomes ten times worse when it comes to a particular scene in "Canvas Sky", so I just want to say right here and now; I like Taichi, and I don't consider him a badguy, villain, or anything. What happens in "Canvas Sky" is a mistake brought on by anger. And if none of you have ever made a mistake, then you can judge. I've made similar mistakes in my life, and people have done the same thing to me. So I'm not trying to say "oh Taichi's evil!" that comes later, in "Love Letters!" (Waah! Just kidding!!) I just think Taichi's the type to respond without fully thinking things throughâ€|.

Now, about the fireworks thing, I got that from "Akachan to Boku". I was reading along, about the part in which Takuya meets Akihiro and siblings at a neighborhood festival. I could go into depth, but I won't. Anyway, when it comes to the part when Takuya grabs Minoru, and Akihiro scoops up Ichika-chan and Maabou, the fireworks explode in the background right there. And I remember thinking, "What a perfect moment for a kiss." But then, after thinking about it for a while, I decided, "No, the perfect moment for a kiss is after the fireworksâ€|there's no distractions, it's just the two of you and the moon." So, that's how I got the ending. And yes, I would have loved it if there had been a kiss between Akihiro and Takuya there, but I think it's be a bit difficult to carry off with squirming kids in your arms.

Before I came up with that, I had a few endings in mind. One of them was the obvious, "Yamato stays with Taichi and Jyou's heartbroken" ending. I was a bit disconcerted that so many people wanted that ending, judging by my email inbox at part three. Do people really dislike Jyou that much? But I couldn't make myself do that ending, showing that even a person who writes as dark as stuff as I do still has a mushy spot somewhere.

The next ending was a kind of "spy, counter spy" ending where Yamato had loved Jyou all the while, and instead of testing Taichi was testing him. I decided against that ending for numerous reasons. For

one, it was too confusing and I wasn't sure I could pull it off. And it kinda made Yamato seem like a jerk, putting Jyou through all that, almost as if he was toying with his feelings. I don't think Yamato would really do that, he might get upset, but I don't think he'd TOY with someone.

A lot of people asked me about Michiko and Shin's relationship, whether they got back together or anythingâ€¦I was vaguely surprised. For one thing, it was just supposed to be a tiny side story, kinda to parallel Jyou and Yamato's relationship, but at the same time, Yamato and Taichi's as well. That one scene at the cafÃ© was originally supposed to be a Jyou and Sora scene, but a friend of mine requested more about Michiko, and how could I refuse? Michiko is NOT a self-insertation. If there is ANY character I feel I'm like in the story it would be Jyou and Shin; their banter and inner thoughts in Paper Moon are very similar to my own. Michiko is supposed to be almost another Jyou type characterâ€¦and, well, there is a secret about her, but I'm not tellingâ€¦besides, I don't even really know if it's really something I should put in to her character. But anyway, I'm not sure if Shin and Michiko got back togetherâ€¦if there's any interest, perhaps I'll add a little bit about their relationship in one of my upcoming stories. If not, well, I guess it's really up to you.

And so ends the free talk.

> <p>

End  
file.